

SENSE OF HOUSE THAT NEWDOW V. UNITED STATES CONGRESS IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE SUPREME COURT'S INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND SHOULD BE OVERTURNED

SPEECH OF

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 19, 2003*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal's decision in *Newdow v. the United States Congress* is inconsistent with the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment and should be overturned.

The Court ruled on a case in which children were required to recite the pledge. Just as we should not bar anyone from reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, we should not force anyone to recite words they do not believe.

As I have stated before, I believe the Ninth Circuit was right in ruling that the reference to "God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional. It is a religious term that does not respect the diversity of faiths and opinion in America and the separation of Church and State as our Constitution requires.

This House has now been given three separate opportunities to vote on almost identical resolutions denouncing the Ninth Circuit for its rulings on this issue. Right or wrong, Congress has made its voice heard. But, it appears that many of my colleagues are not content to let the judicial branch do its job. They want to intervene, exerting as much political pressure as necessary to sway the Supreme Court to side with their far-right Christian ideology.

These same colleagues seem to forget that religious liberty, religious tolerance and freedom of thought and expression were foremost principles in the minds of the Constitution's framers. This resolution before us today states that "religious belief was central to our nation's founding"—completely ignoring these other integral ideals. As written, the resolution flatly mischaracterizes the very foundation of our democracy.

I urge my colleagues to end this effort to derail the Supreme Court's impartial deliberation on this issue. I urge my colleagues to vote no on the resolution.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID AND CHERYL VIENNA

**HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 20, 2003*

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor David and Cheryl Vienna as they prepare to begin their well-deserved retirements. For more than two decades, they have served dozens of clients before the Federal and State governments and, in doing so, have maintained standards of excellence that we would do well to recognize.

In 1978, David founded a Federal Government affairs company called David Vienna and

Associates, and Cheryl joined him a year later. Together, they have made what is now known as Vienna, Gregor and Associates into one of the premier small firms in the Washington area. Among other clients, they represent several from my own State—the California State Senate, the California Franchise Tax Board, and the California Public Employees' Retirement System, the largest pension fund in the United States. My staff and I have worked with the firm many times and we know firsthand the level of knowledge, skill and integrity they bring to every task.

While operating one business successfully is enough of a challenge, David and Cheryl opened a second in 1981. Public Affairs Support Services has, for more than 20 years, filed federal and state campaign finance reports for the political action committees of some of the largest businesses and associations in the country. In this venture, as in their government affairs work, they have demonstrated the expertise and attention to detail that is the hallmark of every successful business owner.

Both David and Cheryl had extensive experience in this very building before starting their companies. David was on the staffs of two Senate subcommittees and worked closely with Senators Abe Ribicoff and Scoop Jackson, while Cheryl was director of legislation for senator Sam Nunn. In their public service, they showed the outstanding character and ability that foreshadowed their future success in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating David and Cheryl Vienna on their distinguished careers and wishing them continued success in their future endeavors.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. DONALD BANGASSER, PRESIDENT OF THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

**HON. JERRY LEWIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 20, 2003*

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to commend the incoming president of the California Medical Association, Dr. Ronald Bangasser. For nearly two decades, I have known Dr. Bangasser as a friend and a community leader in San Bernardino County, California, and I believe he will be a strong asset at the head of the nation's largest state medical association.

Dr. Bangasser has been a prominent member of the San Bernardino County medical community since 1977, when he began in private practice. By 1982, he had established a reputation as an expert at treating complicated wounds as director of the Wound Care Center at Redlands Community Hospital. He became Chief of Staff at the hospital in 1990 and is now Medical Director for the Beaver Medical Group in Redlands.

Known for his interest in teaching, Dr. Bangasser is a member of the American Board of Family Practice, American College of Hyperbaric Medicine, American College of Physician Executives, and is a fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians and

an associate Professor at Loma Linda University Medical Center.

The legions of patients devoted to Dr. Bangasser include many in the retirement communities of Yucaipa, California, and a generation of young athletes at San Bernardino Valley College, where he has given 12,000 sport physicals in 22 years as team physician for the football team. Since 1986, he has served as team physician for the local minor league baseball team, currently known as the Inland Empire 66ers.

Dr. Bangasser is well known for his leadership role in the medical community and on public policy both in California and on the national level. He has served on nine medical association reference committees, and has been a San Bernardino County Medical Society board member for 25 years. He has served in a series of top positions on the California Medical Association, and is a delegate to the American Medical Association. He is a member of the AMA Council on Medical Services, and was recently appointed to the AMA's Quality Committee for NCQA. He was named Outstanding Physician by the San Bernardino County group in 1995, and was presented with the San Bernardino Valley College Distinguished Service Award in 1999.

In the community, Dr. Bangasser spearheaded a collaborative effort between the San Bernardino and Riverside County medical associations and the San Bernardino Bar Association on domestic violence awareness. He annually sponsors and pays for travel costs of two students to AMA events, and helped cover the costs of a group of teens to attend an AMA conference on teen pregnancy. He has served on the boards of the local United Way, the YMCA, the Redlands Community Hospital Foundation and the "Just for You Volunteers" seniors group in Yucaipa.

Dr. Bangasser is not unknown to us in Washington, where he has traveled to testify in support of medical programs, and last year he was honored by President Bush in a White House discussion on senior citizen health. He has already gained a reputation as a strong advocate of health care in his role as president-elect of the 35,000-member CMA.

Along with his other accomplishments, Dr. Bangasser trained as a former Navy Diving Medical Officer, and has taught many colleagues, friends, and patients the joys of this underwater adventure. I can thank him and his wife Susan for helping me rediscover my love for this sport, and helping me to train and qualify as a SCUBA diver.

Mr. Speaker, the job of president of the California Medical Association comes with heavy responsibility, but I am certain Dr. Ronald Bangasser will perform wonderfully in the role. I ask you and my colleagues to congratulate him on his election as president, and wish him success in his future endeavors.

HONORING BENJAMIN BRISCOE, FORMER LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 20, 2003*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and celebration of the Honorable Benjamin Briscoe, former Lord Mayor of Dublin